

Title: **THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS**

Text: John 2:1-11

Subject: *Our Lord's First Miracle*

Date: Sunday Morning — July 6, 2008

 Rescue Baptist Church — Rescue, CA

Introduction:

While you are turning to the second chapter of John's Gospel, let me remind you of some statements in the Old Testament scriptures about God's work. When Moses sang of God's solitariness as God, he sang...

(Exodus 15:11) "Who *is* like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who *is* like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful *in* praises, doing wonders?"

Moses told the children of Israel that the Lord...

(Deuteronomy 4:34) "God assayed to go *and* take him a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes."

Then David sang...

(Psalms 77:14) "Thou *art* the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people."

(Psalms 96:3) "Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people."

In the Book of Job, Job describes our God as he...

(Job 9:10) "Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number."

Zechariah 3:8 tells us that God's elect, sinners saved by his grace, are people "*wondered at*." All those wonders of old foreshadowed the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to accomplish salvation for us. And when he stepped forth in his public ministry, after 30 years of quiet seclusion in Nazareth, as soon

THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS

Nazareth, as soon as he was announced in baptism by Elijah, he stepped forth in dazzling brilliance as “*the God that doest wonders.*”

The title of my message is — **THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS**. Turn with me to John chapter 2. Here we see the Lord Jesus performing his first miracle, turning water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. In performing this miracle, the Holy Spirit specifically tells us, in verse 11, that “*Jesus manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.*”

(John 2:11) “This beginning of miracles (**wonders**) did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”

I take those words to mean that our faith in Christ is created and sustained by the manifestation of his glory to us. This is the wonder of grace. Let’s read the passage together.

(John 2:1-11) “And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: (2) And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. (3) And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. (4) Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. (5) His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do *it*. (6) And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. (7) Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. (8) And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare *it*. (9) When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, (10) And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now. (11) This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”

PRACTICAL LESSONS

THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS

Without question, there are several very practical lessons to be drawn from that which is recorded in John 2:1-11. Like all the miracles that were to follow, “*this beginning of miracles*,” performed by our Savior just a few days after he began his earthly ministry, “*manifested forth his glory*” and is preserved upon the pages of Inspiration for our instruction and edification. In this miracle, there are five things for us to learn.

1. **The Omnipotence of Our Lord Jesus Christ** — Our Savior turned the water into wine, not by his touch, or even by his word, but his will. No prophet or apostle ever did such a thing. He who can turn ordinary water into extra ordinary wine by a mere act of his will is the omnipotent God! If he wills my salvation, none can prevent it. If he wills my safety, none can harm me. If he wills my everlasting inheritance in heavenly glory (And he does – John 17:24) I cannot fail to attain it.
2. **The High Honor Our Lord Places Upon Marriage** — By his presence at the marriage feast, the Son of God said, “This is an honorable thing” (Genesis 1:28; 2:18-25; Hebrews 13:4).

(Genesis 1:28) “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

(Genesis 2:18-25) “And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. (19) And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. (20) And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. (21) And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; (22) And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. (23) And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (24) Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (25) And they were both naked, the man

THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS

the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

(Hebrews 13:4) “Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

One of the first steps toward moral decadence in any society is a low esteem for this ordinance of God. Where there is no sanctity of marriage, there is no regard for God or his law, no regard for moral decency, and no regard for human life. These things stand and fall together!

3. **The Propriety of Feasting and Laughter** — In this passage of Scripture, the Son of God gives his approval both to the party and to the moderate use of wine. — “*A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry*” (Ecclesiastes 7:19). Christianity was never meant to make people miserable. On the contrary, true Christianity increases real joy among men and makes people happy in this world, as well as in the world to come.
4. **The Blessedness of Obedience to Christ** — “*Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it*” (v. 5). The Son of God could have supplied all the wine that was needed without employing these servants. He did not need them! But they would have missed the blessed benefit of being instruments by whom the Son of God brought his miraculous boon of mercy to the wedding guests.
5. **The Character of Christ’s Gifts** — The Son of God always saves the best wine until the last. Marvelous as his grace is, it is only the earnest of our inheritance, a mere foretaste of the glory that is to be revealed in us! In spiritual matters, the best is always kept for the last.
 - The sorrow of repentance is followed by the sweetness of forgiveness.
 - The bitterness of conviction is followed by the gladness of conversion.
 - After the cross follows the crown.
 - After the valley of the shadow of death comes to glory of life eternal with no sorrow, no sin and no death!

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Those are very practical things that should not be overlooked; but we should

THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS

should always look beyond the letter of the Word for that which is spiritual. Did you notice that this chapter begins with the word “*and*”? That indicates that what we read about here is closely connected with what we saw in the first chapter. One of the things prominent in Chapter 1 is the failure of Judaism and the turning away from it to Christ. The Priests and Levites came to John to inquire who he was. He said, “*There standeth one among you whom ye know not*” (John 1:19-26). They did not know the forerunner and did not know the Christ (John 1:11).

(John 1:11) “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”

The Jews were his own nation and all the ordinances of the law (Judaism) were his own things; but his own things would not have him.

The Holy Spirit uses those exact same, two words, “*his own*,” in John 13:1 to speak not of his property, but of his people, those who are truly, everlastingly, eternally “his own.” Listen to the difference...

(John 13:1) “Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”

“*The law and the prophets were until John*” (Luke 16:16). John wound up the Old Testament system! When Christ appeared, Judaism was an empty, meaningless, dead, useless religious form. — Nothing else!

The wine was gone. It had given out. Wine in scripture is the emblem of joy (“*Wine maketh glad the heart of man.*” Psalm 104:15). Judaism still existed as a religious system, but the joy was gone. It gave no comfort to the heart. It had degenerated into a cold, mechanical routine, utterly destitute of joy in God.

They set six water pots before the Lord Jesus. **Those empty water pots of stone represent religion without Christ.** Six is the number of man. It was on the sixth day man was created. Six is the number of the beast, antichrist (Revelation 13:18). Six water pots, not seven, the number of perfection. All that was left of Judaism was the flesh. The feasts of the Lord had become the feasts of the Jews (John 2:13).

THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS

(John 2:13) “And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.”

The water pots were **water pots of stone**, — not silver, which speaks of redemption, — not gold which symbolizes the Divine glory, but stone, that which is of the earth and earthly. And **they were empty!** These water pots were used by the Jews in their observance of their religious traditions, their various religious washings (v. 6). But they were empty! — **Religion without Christ is empty of joy or comfort!**

The Spirit of God specifically calls our attention to the fact that this marriage feast **took place on the third day**.— “*And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee*” (v. 1). But he does not tell us when that was. We may deduce that this took place on the third day after John the Baptist first declared “*Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,*” but we are not specifically told. Why? Is it because there is something significant about the third day? I think so.

- The third day is the day of resurrection.
- It was on the third day in creation that the earth was brought forth from its watery grave (Genesis 1:9-11).

(Genesis 1:9-11) “And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so. (10) And God called the dry *land* Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was* good. (11) And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.”

- Our Lord arose from the dead on the third day.

Judging by 2 Peter 3:8, this is the beginning of the third day of time since this gospel day began. Could it be that the marriage supper of the Lamb shall take place in this third day?

(Hosea 6:1-2) “Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. (2) After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.”

THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS

ANOTHER MARRIAGE FEAST

I have no idea when it will take place, but I do know that there is a day appointed when the marriage shall take place (Isaiah 54:1-8). The Book of God says, “*Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And...these are the true sayings of God*” (Revelation 19:9).

- Jesus our Savior will be there.
- All his disciples will be there.
- And we will never run out of wine!

(Isaiah 54:1-8) “Sing, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou *that* didst not travail with child: for more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. (2) Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; (3) For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. (4) Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. (5) For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. (6) For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. (7) For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. (8) In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.”

(Revelation 19:1-9) “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: (2) For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. (3) And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. (4) And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. (5) And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye

THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS

that fear him, both small and great. (6) And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. (7) Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (8) And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (9) And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”

THE WINE

The water we are told was made wine (v. 9). — The water was not made to look like wine. It was made wine. — The water was not made to taste like wine. It was made wine. — The water was not treated as though it were wine. It was made wine. Let me show you three other things made to be what they could never be, had not God done the work.

- “*The Word was made flesh*” (John 1:14).
- Christ was made sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- We have been made the righteousness of God in him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The good wine of the gospel is Christ himself. When he was made sin for us, it was he and he alone who trod the wine-press of his Father’s wrath as our Substitute, when the Lord bruised him and put him to grief. This is the wine that cheers both God and men.

- When God’s justice took the full draft of it for the sins of the redeemed, the Lord declared himself well pleased.
- And when the poor sinner, by sovereign grace, is first made to drink of the blood of the Lamb, he feels constrained to cry,

“Hallelujah! I have found Him
Whom my soul so long has craved!
Jesus satisfies my longings,
Through His blood I now am saved.”

- Moses’ first miracle turned water into blood, because the law is a ministration of death.
- Christ’s first miracle turned water into wine, because once he comes into

THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS

into your life he makes even the most common mercies (water) boons of grace.

- Truly, the Lord has kept the good wine until now. Never before has my soul been satisfied.

MARY AND THE MASTER

It is not accidental that the Scriptures frequently show us incidents of the Lord Jesus gently reproofing his mother, even publicly. He knew the papists would arise, seeking to deify Mary. Therefore, the Lord Jesus made it obvious that such heresy is altogether of man's doing. But do not imagine that the Lord Jesus was being disrespectful to his mother.

- He called her “*woman*,” because that was the common way to refer to married women respectfully.
- But Mary seemed to be asserting her parental authority, and the Lord Jesus let her know that that authority over him no longer existed. — He teaches men (and women) to cut the apron strings!
- Mary accepted the Lord's rebuke, recognized the his right to act as he pleased, and left the matter entirely in his hands. — What a lesson for us!

HIS HOUR

In verse 4 the Savior said to Mary, “*Mine hour is not yet come.*” Seven references are made in the Gospel of John book to that “*hour*” (John 2:4, 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 12:27, 16:32, 17:1). Our Lord had lived in quiet seclusion in Nazareth for thirty years. From this point on he would become a public and a marked man. His hour refers to the hour of his suffering and death as our Surety. This is the hour for which the world was made.

(John 12:27-33) “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. (28) Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again. (29) The people therefore, that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. (30) Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. (31) Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (32) And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. (33) This he said, signifying what death he should

THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS

should die.”

(Romans 5:5-11) “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (6) For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (11) And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

THE METHOD OF GRACE

We have before, in this story of our Lord turning the water into wine, a good picture of God’s method of grace, a picture of the way God saves sinners.

It was the Lord Jesus Christ who performed the miracle. Yet men were called to fetch the pots, fill them with water, draw off the wine, and carry it to the governor of the feast. The means used were human; though the power that performed the miracle was Divine. It may have seemed foolish to fill the pots with water, but water is a symbol of the written word (Ephesians 5:26); and the way to bring joy and comfort to the human heart today is to fill it with the preached word. God will make it effectual (Romans 10:17).

- The sinner is empty like the water pots.
- The sinner receives the water of the written Word at the command of Christ.
- The water produced the best wine by the power of Christ.
- The change wrought in the new birth is a miracle of grace, as clearly miraculous as the water being turned into wine.
- The miracle manifested forth his glory (v. 11).
- The governor proclaimed it to be the best wine, as truly his grace and redemption is far better than the best the world can give.

GLORY REVEALED

THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS

In verse 11 we are told that our Lord Jesus, by performing this miracle, “*manifested forth his glory,*” and when he did, “*his disciples believed on him.*” The long and short of that is just this: — Faith in Christ depends upon and is caused by the revelation of Christ, the manifesting forth of his glory.

- The Glory of His Person
- The Glory of His Accomplished Redemption
- The Glory of His All-sufficient Grace
- The Glory of His Transforming, Saving Power — He takes common, ordinary things and transforms them into something that manifests forth his glory!

(Isaiah 6:1-7) “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (2) Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. (3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. (4) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. (6) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: (7) And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

(2 Corinthians 4:6-7) “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (7) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

(1 Corinthians 1:18-31) “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (19) For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. (20) Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (21) For after

THE BEGINNING OF WONDERS

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (22) For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: (23) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: (27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: (29) That no flesh should glory in his presence. (30) But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (31) That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

O blessed Lamb of God, manifest forth your glory to these immortal souls and cause all here to believe on the Son of God unto life eternal. Oh, may God the Holy Spirit grant you grace to believe on our Savior. He promises to all who believe that they shall see the glory of God (John 11:40). — “*Come and see!*”

Amen.